VOL. 16 NO. 26

THE FAMILY CIRCLE

JUNE 28, 1940
(Vol. 16 #26)

SEEING THINGS AT

be a mile and a half in circumference, so that it looked more like a group of islands than a continuous creature. It had horns as high as the masts of a vessel and it could lift its head out of the water higher than the mainmast. Its body was four times the size of a ship and was covered with shellwork, and it had great broad paws and arms capable of dragging down a sizable vessel. It spouted like a whale and gloried in a musky odor so powerful that it attracted great shoals of fish. Norwegian fishermen often profited by this and made phenomenal catches, but they had to be careful because if the monster suddenly decided to take a nose dive, the suction as it submerged would drag boats and men down with it. From the description of the Kraken as given by the Bishop of Bergen, it now seems likely that it was a giant squid of a variety known to science for only the past 50 years or so.

AT five o'clock in the afternoon of August 6, 1848, H.M.S. Daedalus was running along prettily on her way from the Cape of Good Hope to St. Helena. Her captain, Peter M'Quhae, was walking the deck with two of his officers when a midshipman came up to them in a state of considerable excitement and reported that something very extraordinary was approaching the ship. The four men hurried to the prow of the boat where they were joined by three men of the crew, and there they stayed for about 20 minutes watching an enormous creature like a serpent, its head and shoulders about four feet out of the water, with a neck more than a foot in diameter and a mane like that of a horse. It seemed to be about 60 feet long, was dark brown in color with a yellowish-white throat, and was traveling at the rate of about 12 knots an hour, though how it propelled itself the watchers could not make out. Afterward the captain said it came so close to the ship that had it been a man, he could have made out the features.

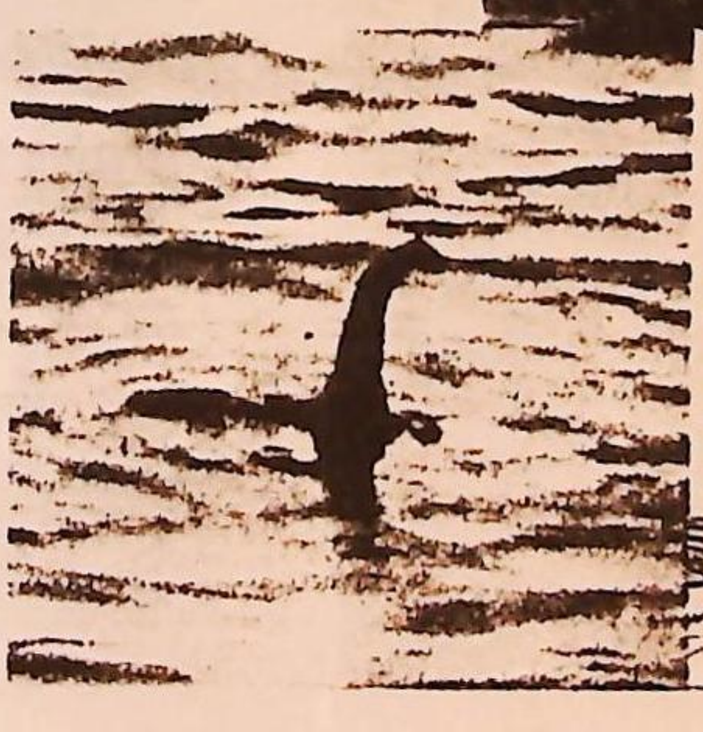
When the captain berthed his ship in England in October, he reported what they had seen to the Admiralty office. His report, printed in the newspapers, made a stir, and the first thing the reporters did was interview a prominent scientist, Sir Richard Owen, later described as the most ponderous naturalist of his day. He made a statement about the captain's report that was entirely in character. He said flatly and definitely that what Captain M'Quhae had seen was a seal, and that the reason he had mistaken it for a sea serpent and described it as such was probably because he had been reading accounts of the Kraken, Norway's fabulous monster, the most famous sea serpent of its own and perhaps of all time.

But Captain M'Quhae was a man who knew his own mind and trusted his own eyes, and he replied to Sir Richard Owen saying that what he had seen was not a seal; as a seafaring man he knew a seal when he saw one. What he had seen was a sea serpent and he had six good men and true to back him up. And as for the Kraken, he had never heard of the beast until Sir Richard mentioned him. So dignified and reasonable-sounding was the captain's answer to the professor that to this day it is the captain's story rather than the professor's comment which is credited by many, and the Daedalus sea serpent ranks high in the list of some 250 more or less authentic creatures that were seen and described between 1520 and 1890.

When Owen said that M'Quhae must have had the Kraken in mind, he was referring to a monster that flourished in the late 17th and early 18th centuries. The part of its back which appeared above the water was said to

Though the Pacific doesn't often figure in sea-serpent stories, this picture (which appeared in a New York paper in 1879) supposedly shows what happened to a boat crew from the U.S.S. Pensacola when it tried to catch a giant ray, or sea devil, off the Lower California coast

Here is what scientists say was the real sea serpent of long ago. It's a 27-foot tylosaurus, a giant mosasaur, extinct for 80,000,000 years, but which once lived in the inland sea of Kansas in the Cretacean age



This photo, though poor, is the clearest ever made of the Loch Ness monster. Dr. Roy Chapman Andrews says it looks like a killer whale's dorsal fin

Hans Egede's sea serpent, which he described in 1734. (Above, right) Showing how a giant squid partly out of water may have been what Egede saw

NOT all the best sea serpents lived far away and long ago. We had a fine specimen right off our own shores and either it or various members of its family were seen frequently off the coast of Gloucester between 1817 and 1820. This creature was said to have a dark brown body about 50 feet long, jointed, and about the thickness of a man's trunk. Its snakelike head was as large as that of a horse. The Linnaean Society of Boston,

EA

ARE THERE SUCH THINGS AS SEA MONSTERS? MOST SCIENTISTS SAY NO. AND YET . . .

BY JO PENNINGTON

a body of naturalists, sent a committee of three to take the testimony of eyewitnesses, and as all the men selected to give evidence were reputable, the Gloucester sea serpent has even today a fairly good standing. It was said to have been seen again in 1822, 1826, and 1849, and then finally in 1875, after which it vanished forever from the sight of man.

Unless, of course, the Pasture Pond sea serpent which turned up in 1886 was the same creature. This monster came up out of the sea near Provincetown, Cape Cod, in 1886, walked across the dunes, and disappeared in the depths of Pasture Pond. The pond was all drained except for a hole in the middle which seemed to be bottomless (the lead did not touch at 250 fathoms—1,500 feet). In 1939 a 40-foot skeleton was washed up at Provincetown and Cape Codders were convinced that this was all that remained of the creature which 50 years ago had disappeared in the hole in Pasture Pond and had gone by some underground channel back to the sea.

Maine had a sea serpent which was said to haunt Penobscot Bay around 1780. The crew of a schooner lying at the mouth of the river told how it leaped over their boat between the masts, and though theirs was a craft of 80 tons, it sank the boat one strake, or plank, by its weight as it touched the deck. That to me is an admirable sea-serpent story, worthy of the land where stories grow taller than anywhere else.

In July, 1875, the crew of H.M.S. Pauline, on its way from Shields to Zanzibar, saw what they reported to be a sea serpent wrapped with two turns of its body around a sperm whale. They gave a vivid description of the battle they witnessed, but it is now known that what they saw was a natural and not an unusual sight—a sperm whale attacking and killing its regular dinner, a squid, which in its death struggles had wrapped its tentacles around the whale.

Only a few years ago Canada produced a sea serpent which became almost a national pet. It was given the name Cadborosaurus, or Caddy for short, and was first seen in the fall of 1933 by a resident of Pender Island, British Columbia. Later that same fall some remains of a marine creature were found and measured, and proved to be those of a mon-

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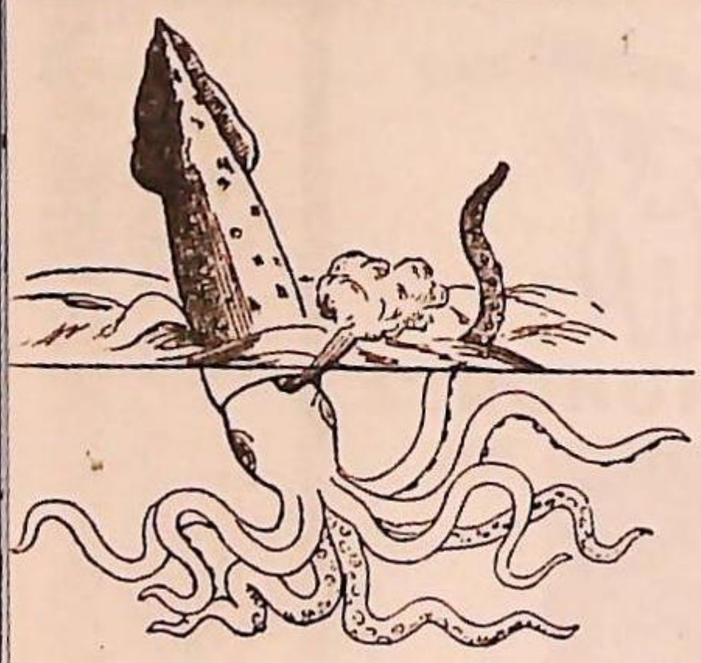
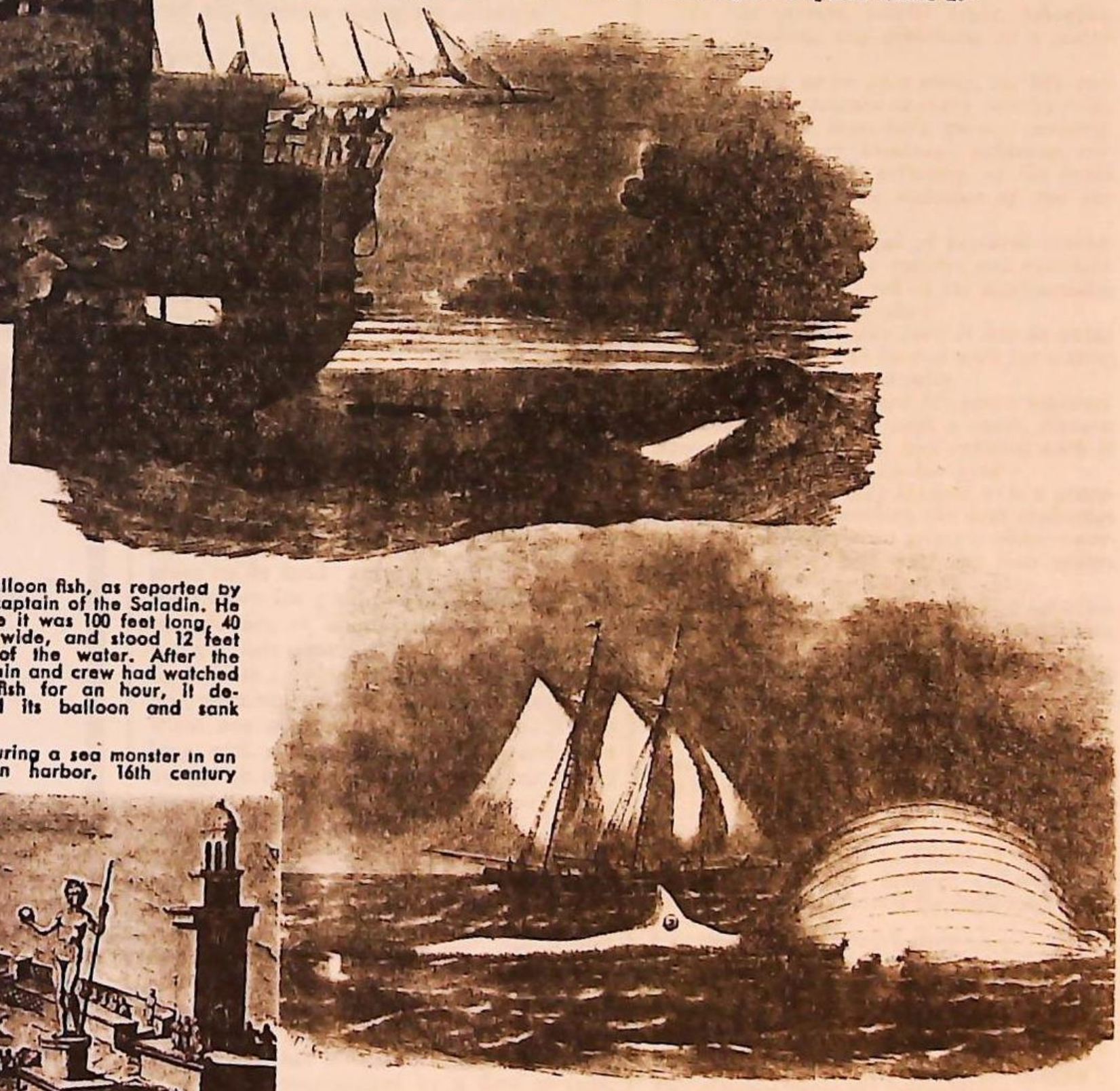
When this 27-foot body was thrown up on the French coast near Cherbourg, there was so little left of it that it could not readily be identified, but one can see how easy it must have been to conclude that it had the form of a sea serpent

The Daedalus sea serpent, seen in 1848, is one of the best authenticated because the captain and some of his crew watched it nearby for 20 minutes



A balloon fish, as reported by the captain of the Saladin. He swore it was 100 feet long, 40 feet wide, and stood 12 feet out of the water. After the captain and crew had watched the fish for an hour, it deflated its balloon and sank



Capturing a sea monster in an Italian harbor, 16th century

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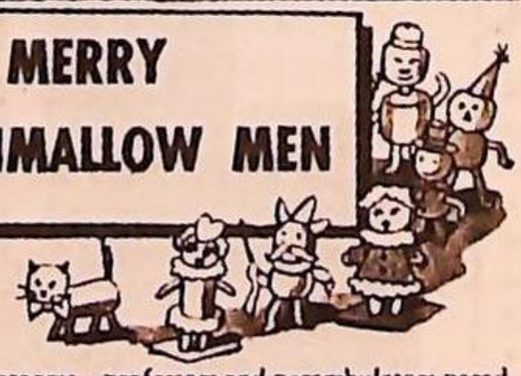

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SEEING THINGS AT SEA

(*Continued from page* 15)

ster 40 feet long with a head like a horse except that it had neither ears nor nostrils.

The English, except for their ponderous naturalists, take their sea serpents seriously. Rudyard Kipling, Lord Northcliffe, and A. Conan Doyle all described sea serpents which they met in their travels. Kipling's short story "A Matter of Fact" gives a description of such a monster, which may have been based on the one he actually saw: "Some six or seven feet above the port bulwarks, framed in fog, and as utterly unsupported as a full moon, hung a face. It was not human and it certainly was not animal. The mouth was open, revealing a ridiculously tiny tongue. There was no sign of teeth in the mouth; but the horror of the face lay in the eyes, for those were sightless—white, in sockets as white as scraped bone, and blind . . ."

Queen Victoria's yacht Osborne came back home in 1877 and reported that it had sighted a sea serpent off Cape Vita in Sicily in June. I cannot help wondering what the Queen said when she heard the story—maybe something like "We are not amused." It may well have been that she thought no yacht of hers had any business seeing sea serpents.

THE Irish sea serpent is, naturally, just a bit more remarkable than that produced by any other nation. It appeared in Ballycottin Bay near Cork, attacked a party of fishermen, and, on being shot, disappeared after disgorging a whole shoal of fish. And those fish, when handled by the men in the boats, gave them terrific electric shocks!

But it is the Scotch who have produced what is the finest sea serpent of modern times. And not only did they do it once, but they have kept on producing it almost every summer. It was first seen in Loch Ness, a long, narrow body of water actually part of the Caledonian Canal, which cuts across the Scottish Highlands in a diagonal line from Moray Firth on the east coast southwest to the Firth of Lorne on the other side. Loch Ness has always had a rather sinister reputation. It is believed that this loch never gives up its dead; anyone who drowns in it stays down for good and all. The kelpies, or waterhorses, of Scottish legend are said to make it their headquarters. Such stories make Loch Ness an ideal setting for a sea serpent and certainly no Highlander was surprised when one appeared in 1933—40 to 50 feet long with a large whiskery head and eight humps on its back. It apparently can travel about 40 miles per hour but never comes nearer the shore than 100 yards.

Many doubtful persons have gone to Inverness, a summer resort on the shore of the loch, expecting to scoff at the story, but they have often come back complete converts to a belief in the creature. There was even talk of capturing it until Commander R. T. Gould, R. N. (Retired), author of a book called "The Case for the Sea Serpent," pointed out that it would require a net 3,000 by 900 feet manipulated by a fleet of tugs, and that traffic through the Caledonian Canal would be tied up for the entire time of capture.

The chief argument in favor of its existence is that four monks and the abbot emeritus of the Benedictine monastery at Fort Augustus on the shore of the loch have all given sound and sober testimony as eyewitnesses. Obviously these pious men have no

(*Please turn to page* 20)

THE PERSONAL TOUCH

(*Continued from page* 12B)

FROM Thomas F. Lynch, 726 S. W. 11th Ave., Portland, Oregon, comes this selection by Mark Twain, which we are glad to reprint.

THE LOWDOWN ON MAN

Man can't sleep out-of-doors without freezing to death or getting rheumatism; he can't keep his nose under water over a minute without being drowned. He's the poorest, clumsiest excuse of all the creatures that inhabit the earth.

He has to be coddled, swathed, and bandaged to be able to live at all. He is a rickety sort of thing any way you take him—a regular museum of inferiorities.

He is always undergoing repairs. A machine as unreliable as he is would have no market.

The lower animals appear to get their teeth without pain or inconvenience; man's come through after months of cruel torture at a time when he is least able to bear it. As soon as he gets them, they must be pulled out again.

The second set will last for a while, but he will never get a set that he can depend on until the dentist makes one.

Man starts in as a child and lives on disease to the end as a regular diet.

He has mumps, scarlet fever, whooping cough, tonsilitis, and diphtheria as a matter of course.

Afterward, as he goes along, his life continues to be threatened at every turn by colds, coughs, asthma, bronchitis, quinsy, consumption, yellow fever, blindness, influenza, carbuncles, pneumonia, softening of the brain and a thousand other maladies of one sort and another.

He's just a basketful of pestilent corruption provided for the support and entertainment of microbes. Look at the workmanship of him in some particulars.

What's the appendix for? It has no value. Its sole interest is to lie and wait for a stray grape seed and breed trouble.

What is his beard for? It's just a nuisance. All nations persecute with a razor. Nature, however, always keeps him supplied with it instead of putting it on his head.

A man wants to keep his hair. It is a graceful ornament, a comfort, the best protection against weather, and he prizes it above emeralds and rubies, and half the time nature puts it on so it won't stay.

Man isn't even handsome, and as for style look at the Bengal tiger—that ideal of grace, physical perfection, and majesty.

Think of the lion, the leopard—then think of man, that poor thing. The animal of the wig, the ear trumpet, the glass eye, the porcelain teeth, the wooden leg, the silver windpipe—a creature that is mended all from top to bottom.

—MARK TWAIN

WE are indebted to Helen G. Groshart, 2065 Holly St., Denver, Colorado, for the opportunity to reprint the following poem.

I know within my heart, dear one,
That there are rare sweet moments when
For just your fleeting hand in mine
God's heaven will send you back again.

I know that when tempestuous days
Make tatters of my dreams, you'll span
The distance from the farthest star
To bring me courage—if you can.

Oh, yes, but years have made me brave—
Grim life I dare to face alone;
I do not ask that you shall leave
A paradise for that, my own.

But when, through autumn's dusk
A thread of hearth-fire smoke I see,
Then, oh, my dear, though heaven be sweet,
Please walk that twilight road with me!

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CANADA DRY
BEVERAGES

SEEING THINGS AT SEA

(*Continued from page* 16)

reason either to lie or exaggerate, and the abbot has lived on or near the loch for the better part of 50 years. Naturalists, after reading reports and studying drawings of the Ness Monster, have pronounced it a giant squid, an elephant seal, an enormpus crocodile, a German blimp that has been floating around since 1918, or a hippopotamus. A crocodile or a hippopotamus swimming around in a Scottish loch is almost harder to believe in than a sea serpent. Roy Chapman Andrews studied the photograph which a London newspaper correspondent took of it and said that what appeared to be the head and shoulders of a sea serpent bore a striking resemblance to the dorsal fin of a killer whale.

When a young man whose name is not revealed went to Dr. W. Reid Blair, the director of the New York Zoological Park, and offered to go to Loch Ness, capture the monster, and bring it back alive, Dr. Blair said he would pay $25,000 for it if it was in good health and at least 40 feet long. Dr. Blair later said he made the offer as a joke, but he cannot be entirely skeptical about the possible existence of the sea serpent because he also said, "Seriously, there's no doubt in my mind that some unusual and unknown creature is showing itself in that lake."

The town of Inverness has profited by its serpent. Shops in the town are full of reproductions of it—wooden monsters for children to ride like hobbyhorses; rubber ones to blow up and cling to when swimming; and little bronze objects of the unnamable species known as novelties. The monster even had its portrait painted and exhibited—appropriately enough in water color. A recent shortage of salmon in the lake was attributed to the creature, who was presumably taking more than his share. The Scotch government has seriously warned visitors that they would be punished if they harmed their marine attraction.

FOR some reason it is always slightly discreditable to have seen a sea serpent. The author of "Mysteries of the Sea," J. G. Lockhart, wonders why this should be so, and Kipling's "A Matter of Fact" is based on the unbelief invariably shown toward any description of such a phenomenon. Plenty of people believe in ghosts and are not only said to be psychic but get good money for their ghostly messages. The Irish believe in fairies and the Scotch in changelings and are accordingly thought charming and romantic. The Chinese and other Oriental races believe in dragons and that seems sinister and fascinating. But let any man say he has seen a sea serpent and he is immediately called a poor deluded being.

Especially by the naturalists. And more attention would be paid to their doubting comments if they could themselves agree as to what actually is seen. But when they see a drawing or photograph or are told a story or shown the remains of a sea monster, they all begin to give different opinions. Basking shark, says one; bottlenosed whale, says another; fur-bearing seal, sea cow (which are supposed to be extinct), blackfish, ribbonfish, German blimp, hippopotamus—what are we to think of these learned men who are so unable to agree among themselves?

Of course, it is probable that many times when a traveler brings home a story of a sea serpent he has mistaken some known creature for the more questionable species. For example, he might have seen porpoises swimming one behind the other, rising regularly to take breath and so giving the appearance of a snakelike creature moving in vertical undulations. He might have seen a slight of seafowl or a brood of ducks swimming on the water, or masses of seaweed half awash. He might have seen basking sharks, which when not basking often swim in pairs one behind the other with the dorsal fin and upper lobe of the tail just above the surface, thus giving the appearance of a body 50 to 60 feet long. He might have seen a ribbonfish or an oarfish, which often grow to be 20 to 30 feet long, are snakelike in form, and abound in the Mediterranean. And he might have seen sea lions breaking the surface of the water to breathe.

But what he most probably and most frequently saw and took for a sea serpent—at least in the old days—was the giant squid, not long known to science. These abound on the coasts of Scandinavia, the British Isles, and the eastern coast of North America, in all of which places, as you have seen, the best sea serpents are found.

ADMITTING that any of the above-named may have been taken for a sea serpent, there is still the question: *Is* there such a thing? "When, however, all these and similar possibilities have been explored, there still remain a number of independent and apparently credible stories which are not satisfactorily explained." That is what H. W. Parker, B.A., of the Natural History Museum of South Kensington says in his article in the 14th edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. And he makes this further comment: "In the depths of the sea there still may exist gigantic creatures of which we have no knowledge and without this knowledge, remote though it may be in the background, it is unwise to deny the existence of sea serpents." Louis Agassiz, one of the greatest American naturalists, and Philip Gosse and Henry Lee, well known British naturalists, all of whom lived in the latter part of the 19th century—these and many other sound men of science say that there may well be such a creature as a sea serpent.

A distinguished British naturalist and traveler, Malcolm Burr, in 1934 wrote that no known creature fulfills all the conditions given in descriptions of the sea serpent—the reptilian appearance, the spouting like that of a whale, the frill or mane around the neck, the notched crest on the back. But there may be in the sea a huge lizardlike creature (a tailed batrachian related to the newts) which would come very near to having all those attributes. The land species, of course, is small, but there is no reason why the marine variety may not be large, and the most curious point of resemblance is that the male of the former species has a notched crest along the neck which dries up after the mating season. In any event, no one believes any longer, as they did in the last century, that the sea serpent is a survival from prehistoric times of some creature like the plesiosaurus, a marine reptile which has been extinct for 60,000,000 years.

NOTHING the sea can ever produce is likely to rival in horror and strangeness the giant squid which was taken aboard a Gloucester schooner in 1870. Parts of this creature were sent to the Peabody Museum at Harvard and from them the entire animal was reconstructed—a monster 42 feet long, weighing about 2,000 pounds, with eight arms extending from its head and two tentacles

...80 feet long and eyes eight inches in ...eter. It is believed that squid sometimes ...n a length of 60 feet. The smaller ones ... fast swimmers and have been known to ...mp over rowboats in their paths. It may have been a squid, therefore, which caused such a commotion by jumping across the deck of the schooner in Penobscot Bay. At any rate, no sea serpent, however fearsome, could be any more unpleasant to meet in the open waters than this authenticated monster of the deep.

One reason scientists sneer at sea serpents is probably because several times they have been the victim of hoaxes. About 1820 a "Dr." Albert Koch produced a gigantic skeleton which he said he had found in Alabama. Professor Silliman, a leading naturalist of his time, commented that it differed essentially from any existing or fossil serpent and rather timidly and vaguely said that it just might be the remains of a sea serpent. The pseudo Dr. Koch took his "Hydrargos," which was 114 feet long, all over Europe and made a tidy fortune out of it. It was ultimately shown to be made up of the bones of half a dozen skeletons, probably of whales, ingeniously put together by the exhibitor. Professor Silliman must have felt very much like his name when this report reached him.

In 1855 a sea serpent was reported to have been seen in an inland lake in New York State at the town of Perry and was described as a hideous reptilian creature almost 100 feet long. A company was organized with a capital stock of $1,000 to devise ways and means of capturing it. And then it came out that an enterprising hotelkeeper named Walker had made it out of painted canvas and inflated it to make it float.

Parenthetically, mermaids and mermen have always been as popular as sea serpents and they were once supposed not only to have been seen, but to have been captured, baptized into the Christian faith, killed, and eaten. In 1822 a mummified "mermaid" was exhibited in London and 300 people a day paid a shilling apiece to see it. But the exhibitor got into trouble and the mermaid vanished for quite a time, only to reappear in the museum of our own Phineas T. Barnum, where it was shown as the Feejee Mermaid. Barnum made a neat sum out of her, but later in his life, when he grew pious, he worried a lot about this and other fakes of his, fearing that he would roast in hell for them. Because all the time he knew that his Feejee Mermaid was made of the upper part of a monkey's body joined to the lower part of a fish's tail so cleverly that it was not detected by any visitor to the museum.

That is the case for and against the sea serpent. Is there such a thing? Is it a serpent, a ribbonfish, a blackfish, a seal, a whale, a sea cow, a marine lizard, a survivor from prehistoric times, or is it simply a figment of the human imagination? It may be appropriate to quote what Barnum said about humbugs—and surely no one was better qualified than he to speak on that subject: "If the fact could be definitely determined," he said, "I think it would be discovered that in this wide-awake country there are more persons humbugged by believing too little than too much." And, as has so often been said in another connection, maybe Barnum was right. At least when one begins to study marine life —from a squid weighing a ton or more to a seahorse no bigger than your finger—one cannot help thinking that there may be stranger fish still in the sea than ever came out of it.

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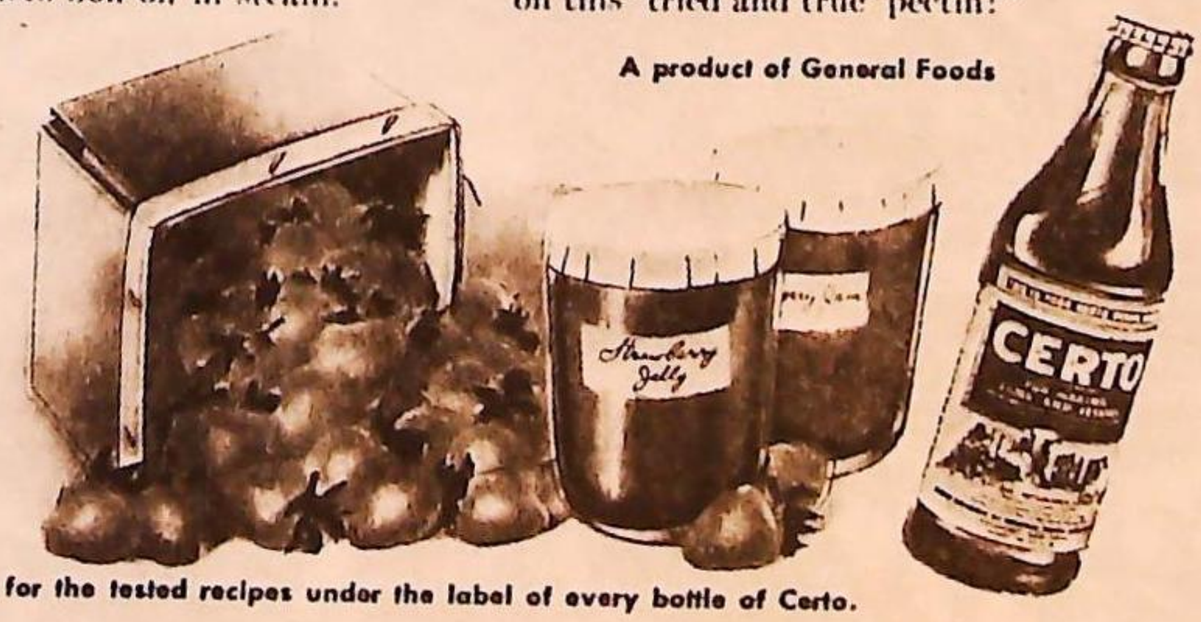

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